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CURRENT RESEARCH IN CANADIAN URBAN HISTORY

The growth of interest in Canada's urban past is evident by the number of publications and completed theses in several disciplines that have recently appeared. And yet, judging by the amount of research currently underway, we have seen only the tip of the iceberg. The following is a preliminary list of researchers and projects partly based on a questionnaire I sent out last July. It is certainly far from complete; I would estimate it includes no more than two-thirds of those working in the field. Publication here hopefully will remind those whose names do not appear to submit their research topics to me for inclusion in subsequent years.

The list includes 130 researchers, working on various places and themes and employing a variety of methodologies. Almost all are associated with a university; more than half (75) are working for a graduate degree, but many of these are also full-time faculty members. Several are employed by government branches such as the National Museum of Man. Unfortunately the list does not include writers of popular urban biographies for they seem to work in isolation from the academic community (eg. Paul O'Neill on St. John's). It must be mentioned that many of those whose names appear here do not regard themselves as "urban historians". However, their research relates explicitly or implicitly to the historical development of particular cities and towns or to the broader aspects of urbanization in the past. A fairly broad spectrum of disciplines in addition to history is included. Geographers are by far the most active among the social scientists while the interest among those in planning and architecture appears to be growing. On the other hand, relatively few sociologists or economists seem concerned with the historical dimension of urban studies. The involvement by geographers has been accompanied by a tendency by some whose training and research interest were not Canadian to make the Canadian city a part of, or the primary portion of their work (eg. James T. Lemon, Deryk Holdsworth, Fred Dahms). Among historians, several whose work is well known in other areas of Canadian history have recently become involved to varying degrees in urban history (eg. T.W. Acheson, William Kilbourn, Patricia Roy, and John Saywell).